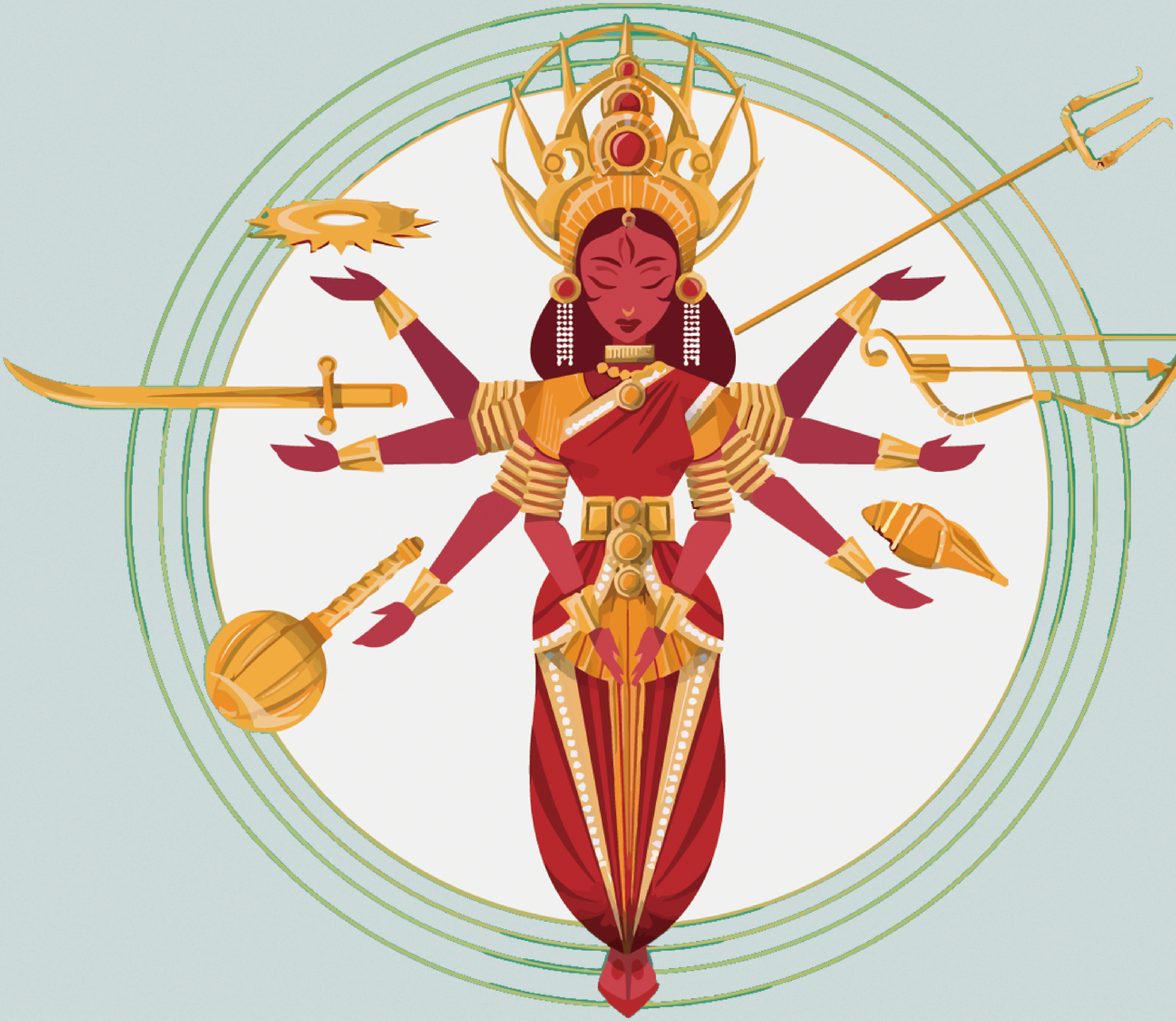
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THE NINE NIGHTS OF DURGA

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MA DURGA

THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF DURGA

DESPITE THE FACT THAT HINDUISM IS KNOWN FOR HAVING HUNDREDS OF GODS AND GODDESSES,
MOST HINDU TRADITIONS BELIEVE THERE IS JUST ONE GODDESS,

OR DEVI, WHO MANIFESTS IN MANY VARIOUS WAYS.



DEVI, WHICH MEANS "GODDESS" IN SANSKRIT, CAN TAKE ON AS MANY DIFFERENT FORMS AS SHE WANTS.

"SHAKTI," WHICH MEANS "ENERGY," IS A POPULAR NICKNAME FOR HER. SO, HOW DOES THIS CONNECT TO DURGA? DURGA IS ONE OF DEVI'S OR SHAKTI'S MANY INCARNATIONS. DURGA WAS NOT BORN TO HAVE A CHILD LIKE SOME OF DEVI'S OTHER FORMS, BUT RATHER TO SLAY A DEMON. MAHISA ASURA WAS A BUFFALO DEMON WHO WAS ALSO A GOD'S COUSIN.

BRAHMA, THE CREATOR DEITY, GRANTED HIM IMMORTALITY WITH ONE CONDITION: HE MAY BE MURDERED BY A WOMAN.

MAHISA ASURA, ALONG WITH THE OTHER ASURAS WHO WERE GODS' RELATIVES, ASSAULTED ALL OF THE GODS AND COULDN'T BE DEFEATED THANKS TO MAHISA'S NEW IMMORTALITY.



BRAHMA

THE GODS RESOLVED TO COMBINE THEIR EFFORTS IN ORDER TO DESTROY MAHISA, RESULTING IN DURGA, A FEMALE AVATAR OF DEVI.



ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THE TWO FOUGHT FOR NINE NIGHTS BEFORE DURGA EMERGED VICTORIOUS. THIS IS COMMEMORATED DURING THE NAVARATRI FESTIVAL, WHICH LITERALLY TRANSLATES TO "NINE NIGHTS."

CHAMUNDI



DURGA KILLED MAHISHA, THE ASURA RULER. THE ASURAS RETURNED TO PATAAL-LOK, THE UNDERWORLD, AFTER HIS DEATH.

SHUMBHA VOWED VENGEANCE AND ASCENDED TO THE ASURA THRONE. HE LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON SVARG-LOK, THE DEVAS' DWELLING, WITH THE HELP OF HIS BROTHER NISHUMBHA, AND WAS SUCCESSFUL IN TAKING IT.

WHILE THE ASURAS WERE CELEBRATING THEIR VICTORY, KING SHUMBHA'S FAITHFUL LIEUTENANTS CHANDA AND MUNDA KEPT AN EYE ON THE DEPOSED GODS' MOVEMENTS.



THE DEVAS RUSHED TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND BEGGED TO GODDESS DURGA FOR ASSISTANCE. INSTEAD OF DURGA, LORD SHIVA'S CONSORT PARVATI EMERGED FROM HER ABODE TO LISTEN TO THEIR WOES. SHE WAS UNDERSTANDING. A WOMAN'S FIGURE TUMBLED OUT OF HER BODY, STUNNING TO BEHOLD. AMBIKA WAS THE DURGA INCARNATION.

"VICTORY TO AMBIKA!" SAID THE DEVAS, WHO WERE PLEASED TO SEE THE CELESTIAL WARRIOR.

THE GODS RACED TO MOUNT HIMAVAT, PLEADING WITH GODDESS DURGA FOR HELP. LORD SHIVA'S CONSORT PARVATI, RATHER THAN DURGA, EMERGED FROM HER ABODE TO LISTEN TO THEIR COMPLAINTS. SHE WAS CONSIDERATE. THE FIGURE OF A WOMAN ERUPTED FROM HER BODY, AMAZING TO BEHOLD. AMBIKA WAS THE MANIFESTATION OF DURGA.

THE DEVAS, WHO WERE OVERJOYED TO SEE THE CELESTIAL WARRIOR, EXCLAIMED, "VICTORY TO AMBIKA!"

SHUMBHA LISTENED INTENTLY AS HIS SPIES RECOUNTED EVERYTHING THAT HAD OCCURRED ON MOUNT HIMAVAT. WHEN THEY TOLD HIM ABOUT THE GODDESS AMBIKA, HE WAS ECSTATIC. SHE SOUNDED LIKE THE EMBODIMENT OF FEMININE GRACE.

HE ANNOUNCED, "I WILL MAKE HER MY QUEEN."

"WITHOUT A DOUBT, SHE WAS CREATED FOR ME, THE MASTER OF THE THREE WORLDS!"

HE SENT ONE OF HIS COURTIERS TO THE GODDESS WITH A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

AMBIKA WAS AMUSED BY THE SITUATION.

"I'D WANT TO BE HIS QUEEN," SHE EXPRESSED HER DESIRE, "BUT IS HE THE STRONGEST?"

"STRONGEST?" THE ENVOY INQUIRED.

"I'VE MADE A COMMITMENT TO ONLY MARRY THE THREE WORLDS' MOST POWERFUL WARRIOR. IS HE THE MOST POWERFUL?"

"HE IS VERY STRONG," THE ENVOY REMARKED.

"DIDN'T HE DEFEAT THE DEVAS?" YOU MIGHT WONDER.



"HOWEVER, IS HE CAPABLE OF DEFEATING ME?" ONLY IF HE CAN DEFEAT ME IN COMBAT WILL I BELIEVE HE IS THE STRONGEST!"

THE EMISSARY RETURNED TO HIS MASTER, DISTRAUGHT, TO INFORM HIM OF AMBIKA'S REJECTION OF HIS PROPOSITION.

SHUMBHA WAS IRRITATED. "HER ARROGANCE COMPLEMENTS HER BEAUTY," HE OBSERVED, "BUT SHE HAS TO BE PUT IN HER PLACE!"

HE SUMMONED DHUMRA-LOCHANA, HIS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, AND TOLD HIM TO BRING AMBIKA TO HIM.

TO CARRY OUT HIS KING'S ORDERS, DHUMRA-LOCHANA MARCHED AT THE HEAD OF AN ARMY OF BATTLE-HARDENED TROOPS.

HE SURGED FORWARD WITH A THUNDERING ROAR WHEN HE SAW AMBIKA.

THE GODDESS STOOD MOTIONLESS AS HE APPROACHED. "HOOOM!" SHE SAID WHEN HE GOT CLOSE ENOUGH. THE SOUND WAVE LANDED IN THE MIDDLE OF DHUMRA-FOREHEAD LOCHANA'S AND...POOF! HE'D BEEN REDUCED TO A SMATTERING OF ASH!

WHEN SHUMBHA LEARNED OF THE DEATH OF HIS BRAVEST WARRIOR, HE WAS FURIOUS. HE SCREAMED, GLARING AT CHUNDA AND MUNDA, "SHE'S MOCKING ME!" "SHE'S MAKING FUN OF ME!" SHE HAS NO IDEA WHO SHE'S UP AGAINST! GET HER NOW! TAKE HER BY THE HAIR AND DRAG HER OVER TO ME!"

AMBIKA WAS IRRITATED WHEN SHE SAW CHANDA AND MUNDA ARRIVE. HER BROWS FURROWED INTO A DARK, ANGRY SCOWL, AND THE DREADFUL FIGURE OF KAALI ERUPTED FROM HER FOREHEAD.

WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA SAW KAALI MAA APPROACHING THEM WITH HER BLOODSHOT EYES, A GARLAND OF SKULLS AROUND HER NECK, AND HER TONGUE LOLLING, THEY WERE TERRIFIED. SHE DESTROYED THEIR ARMY, KNOCKED OFF THEIR HEADS, AND DELIVERED THEM TO GODDESS AMBIKA, WHO HUGGED HER AND PRAISED HER AS CHAMUNDI, CHANDA AND MUNDA'S SLAYER.

SHUMBHA WAS AT A STANDSTILL FOR THE TIME BEING. BUT HE WOULD EVENTUALLY MAKE WAR AGAINST GODDESS AMBIKA ONCE MORE.

MAA DURGA

THE NINE NIGHTS OF DURGA

AVATARS

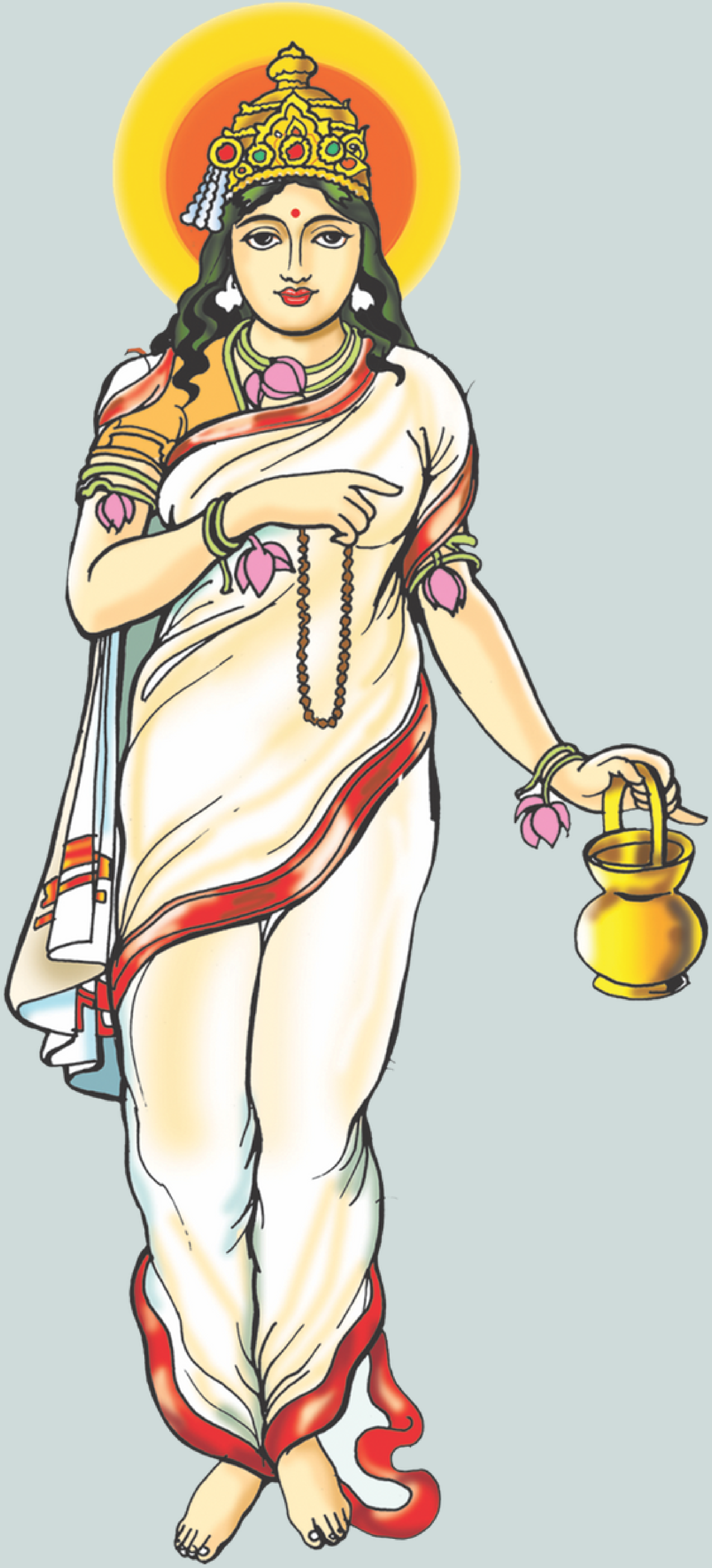


DAY 1

GODDESS SHAILAPUTRI



SHAILAPUTRI DAUGHTER OF THE MOUNTAIN



DAY 2

GODDESS BRAHMACHARINI

THE GODDESS OF PENANCE

DAY 3

CHANDRAGHANTA

THE GODDESS OF WAR



THE MARRIED VERSION OF GODDESS DURGA

DAY 4

KUSHMANDA

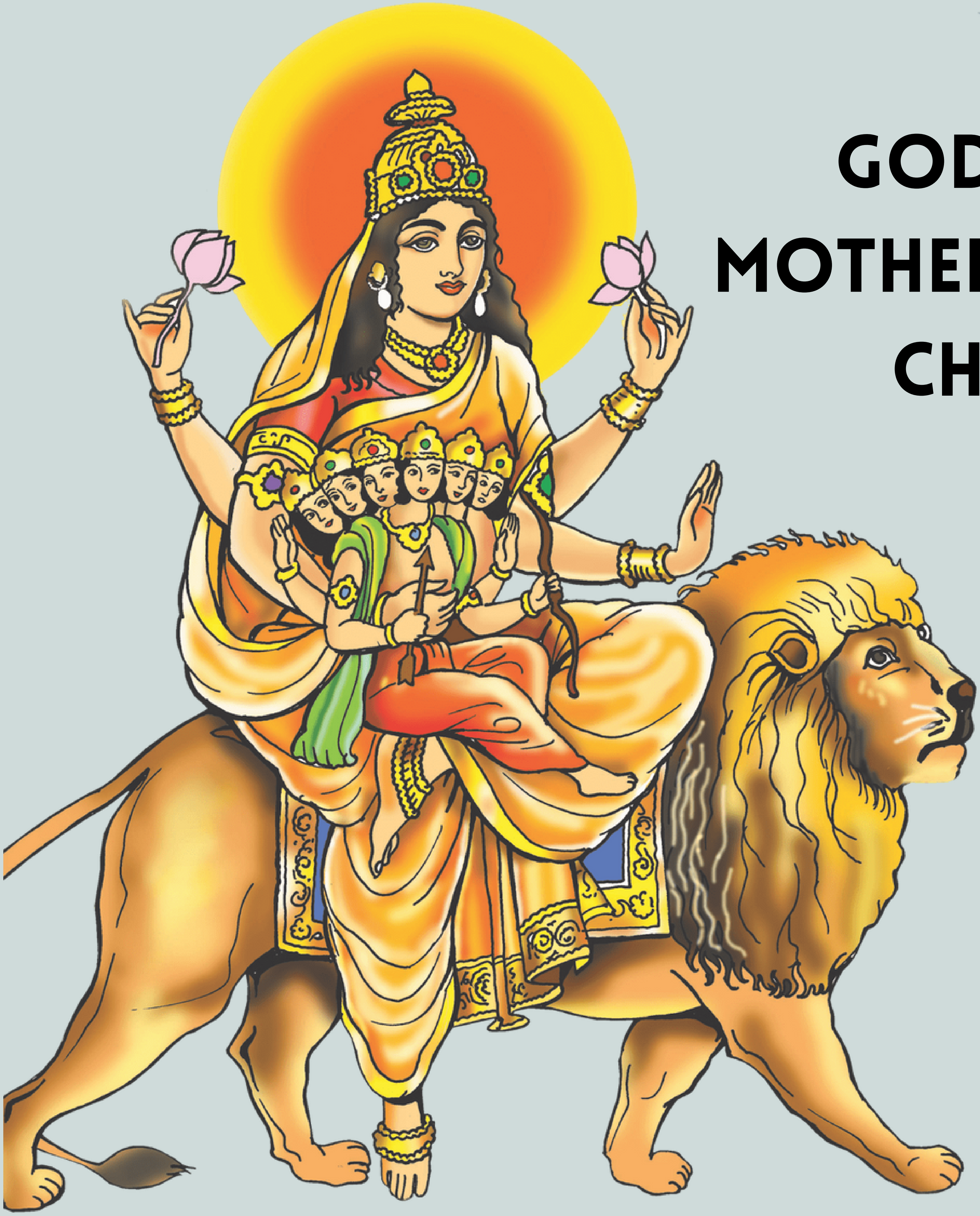


THE GODDESS OF CREATION

THE GODDESS OF LIGHT AND ENERGY

DAY 5

SKANDAMATA

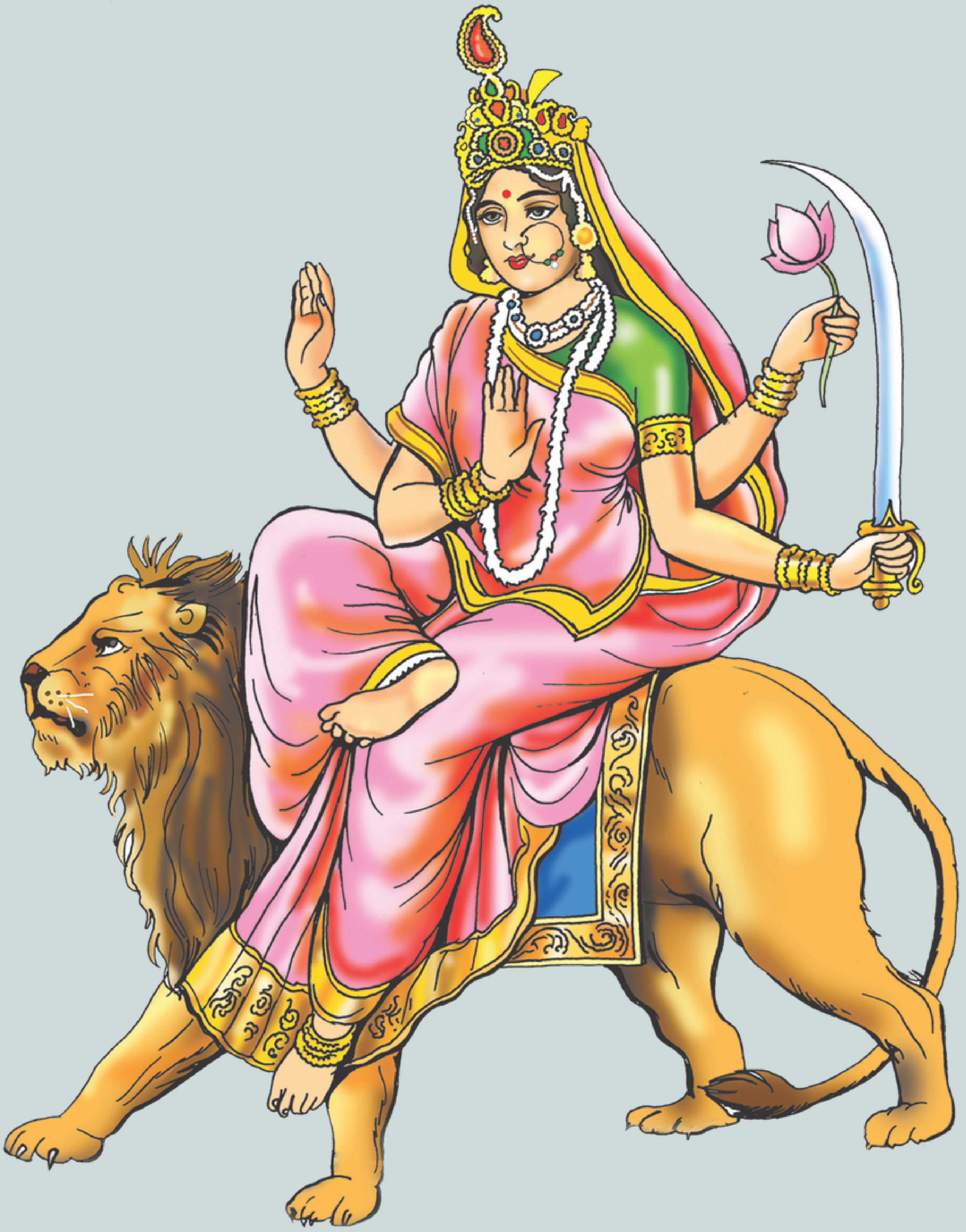


GODDESS OF MOTHERHOOD AND CHILDREN

DAY 6

KATYAYANI

GODDESS OF POWER



DAY 7

KAALRATRI

GODDESS OF AUSPICIOUSNESS AND COURAGE



DAY 8

MAHAGAURI



GODDESS OF LIBERATION AND KNOWLEDGE

DAY 9

GODDESS SIDDHIDATRI

GODDESS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT





FACTS ABOUT GODDESS DURGA

- SHE IS SEEN RIDING A LION. WHILE A LION SIGNIFIES POWER, MAA DURGA, WHO IS SITTING ON A LION IS THE ULTIMATE POWER, SHAKTI.
- GODDESS DURGA IS KNOWN AS TRIYAMBAKE WHICH MEANS SHE HAS THREE EYES. HER THREE EYES SIGNIFY AGNI, SURYA AND CHANDRA.
- BY HER VERY NAME, MAA DURGA CAN BE CONCEIVED AS THE SUPREME POWER. THE WORD 'DURGA' MEANS INVINCIBLE.
-
- GIVEN THAT SHE IS THE SUPREME POWER, MAA DURGA WAS ABLE TO DESTROY MAHISHASURA, THE DEMON WHO TOOK VARIOUS FORMS. SHE IS THEREFORE KNOWN AS MAHISHASURA MARDINI.

gadsess durga

